

AR 15-02 Supplement

E-mail Retention Guidelines

E-mail has become the communication method of choice for city government and is often used to communicate substantive information previously committed to paper and transmitted by regular land mail. E-mail messages are replacing phone conversations and face to face meetings that in the past would not have been documented or included in files. Electronic messages that document decisions, policies, procedures, operations or delivery of services are evidence of official city business and need to be managed as records. The E-mail server is a transport device and should not be used to maintain records of any kind. In order to minimize risks and cost associated with record management and preserve storage resources, The City of Hobbs in accordance with 1.13.4 NMAC Appendix A, offer the following guidelines.

Upon receipt of an E-mail users shall:

1. Evaluate the E-mail to decide if it is a record or non-record.

- Examples of Public Record E-mail include:
 - correspondence regarding management, financial, operating procedures or policy matters;
 - messages containing minutes of meetings, or transcripts of hearings;
 - messages regarding vital public information such as environmental reports;
 - messages that are relied upon in the development of management, financial, operating procedures or policy; or
 - final reports or recommendations;
- Examples of Non-record E-mail include:
 - personal Correspondence;
 - promotional material;
 - duplicate copies of messages sent to multiple people;
 - copies of documents distributed for convenience or reference;
 - announcements of social events, such as retirement parties;
 - junk mail (spam, advertisements, etc.); or
 - messages to or from e-mail distribution lists not directly related to City business;
- Examples of Transitory E-mail:
 - Much of the communication via e-mail has a very limited administrative value. For instance, an e-mail message notifying employees of an upcoming meeting would only have value until the meeting has been attended or the employee receiving the message has marked the date and time in his or her calendar.

- E-mail messages may have an official context but not be part of a business transaction. The following examples illustrate e-mail with an official context, but of no value beyond reference:
 - general departmental correspondence regarding routine business activities (transmittal messages and responses to routine questions); or
 - Inter-office messages regarding employee activities (holiday parties, etc.), phone calls or invitations and responses to work related events (meetings, etc.);

2. **Delete transitory and non-record e-mail** from the e-mail server mailbox Inbox/Drafts/Sent Items/Deleted Items; or move to personal folders.
3. **Respond to business e-mail.** Employees should act on business correspondence immediately. Although the filing and maintenance of the e-mail records is important, it is more important to conduct the central work of the city or department and respond promptly to business e-mail.
4. **Save e-mails which are records as soon as possible.** Employees should file any correspondence including attachments that is directly related to the business functions of the City or Department. Retention requirements are dependent on type of record.
 - E-mail concerning a contract or agreement must be retained for the minimum retention period, prescribed by that record series, of six years after termination of contract or agreement.
 - E-mail correspondence regarding administration of the city or departments including coordination of programs, policy, regulations and procedures that impact the City of Hobbs; must be retained for two years after close of fiscal year in which created then transferred to archives for appraisal and final disposal.
 - Options for retention are to:
 - Print the E-mail and store in a manual filing system or store E-mail in an electronic filing system for long term retention.
 - Move E-mail to an outlook personal folder on local computer where they will be retained until deleted
 - If enabled electronically archive the E-mail using the message archiver button on outlook. Messages and attachments will be retained for 2 years then deleted.
5. **To relieve and prevent an overloaded system;** E-mail messages left in Outlook mailbox older than 28 days will be automatically archived on local computer and purged from the Exchange Server after 30 days.